

**SWITCH FABRIC CAPABLE OF AGGREGATING MULTIPLE CHIPS AND  
LINKS FOR HIGH BANDWIDTH OPERATION**

5

**ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE**

A switching fabric capable of supporting high bandwidth switching operations is disclosed. In one aspect, multiple switching chips and multiple links thereto are used to provide a high bandwidth switching fabric. In  
10 another aspect, payload data is transmitted following grant of its previously transmitted corresponding request. In yet another aspect, the switching fabric operates in a pipelined manner.